

Johns Hopkins University

**ENHANCING THE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS BY DEVELOPING PROCEDURES FOR THE
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENTAL PRE-AWARD ADMINISTRATOR: A STUDY AT A TOP TEN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY**

by
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Abstract

The field of research administration is an ever-changing environment, requiring individuals within this profession to remain pro-active. For those responsible for pre-award functions, the proposal preparation and submission process can be very involved, with varying requirements dependent upon the sponsor being submitted to. Although every pre-award administrator will develop processes and procedures to support the production of quality proposals, the engineering departmental pre-award administrator is often faced with complex requirements. To enhance the proposal submission process for the engineering departmental pre-award administrator, this capstone project provides data utilized to support the following recommendations by the author: Development of a Proposal Handbook, Creation of a Quality Assurance Group, Creation of a Pre-award Support Group, Establishment of Cross-training for Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) Staff and College of Engineering (COE) pre-award Administrators (PAs), and Uniformity across departments. The establishment of a pre-award handbook will not only provide basic information for COE PAs but also additional tools and resources that can be utilized by each PA. These recommendations are derived from feedback obtained via surveys conducted at the University of Florida and the personal experiences of the author. By creating tools and resources that are tailored to the unique needs of the engineering departmental PA, the quality and efficiency of proposal submissions will increase and the needs of faculty and requirements of sponsors will not only be met, but exceeded.

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Acronyms

DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NSF	National Science Foundation
ONR	Office of Naval Research

Abbreviations

COE	College of Engineering
Co-PI	Co-Principal Investigator
DSP	Division of Sponsored Programs
IHE	Institution of Higher Education
OR	Office of Research
PA	Pre-award Administrator
PAPPG	Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide
PASG	Pre-award Support Group
PI	Principal Investigator
QA	Quality Assurance
QAG	Quality Assurance Group
RA	Research Administrator
SOW	Statement of Work
UF	University of Florida
UFIRST	University of Florida Integrated Research Support Tool
UF RAP	University of Florida Research Administration Portal

Glossary

- UFIRST.** UF Integrated Research Support Tool is a web-based system utilized by the University of Florida for both proposal and award management.¹
- Pre-Award Administrator.** Research administrator within a unit responsible for the preparation, review, and at times, submission, of all required proposal documentation.
- Proposal.** Document utilized by a researcher to request funding for a project, center, or equipment from a sponsor; not always solicited.
- Solicitation.** Document utilized by a sponsor to advertise funding opportunities; includes guidelines and requirements for the proposal submission.
- Cost-share.** Portion of overall project costs designated within an agreement that are covered by the receiving Institution, or an outside party, and not by the sponsor.
- Collaboration.** Joint effort between faculty on a research project to complete the proposed statement of work; can be internal or external.

¹ University of Florida. 2019. "UF Integrated Research Support Tool". Accessed October 12, 2019. <https://research.ufl.edu/ufirst.html>

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background.

For any Institution of Higher Education (IHE) actively involved in research, the proposal submission process is an integral part of the overall award life cycle. While each IHE is going to have their own unique research portfolio indicative of their mission, a significant portion of the funding utilized in support of that research is received as a direct result of proposal submissions. In 2018, The University of Florida (UF) reported \$836.6 million in research funding, with \$85.3 million directly allocated to the College of Engineering (COE).² These funds are received from a wide variety of sponsors, requiring Pre-Award Administrators (PAs) to be versatile and well-versed with the nuances of each.

Although it is not unreasonable to assume that each academic unit within an IHE will submit proposals to many of the same sponsors, the frequency of which proposals are submitted to these sponsors will vary depending on the research that is being conducted. Given the nature of the research within the COE, a majority of the funding that is received comes from Federal sponsors. These include, but are not limited to: United States Department of Defense (DoD), United States Department of Energy (DoE), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As such, it is imperative that PAs within the COE, have a clear understanding of the requirements and nuances associated with each sponsor.

² University of Florida. 2018. "2018 Annual Report." Accessed September 29, 2019. https://research.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018_AnnualReport_web.pdf

1.2. Statement of the Problem.

For PAs assigned to the COE, ensuring that each proposal submission adheres to both institutional and sponsor guidelines is vital. Without strict adherence to these requirements, the likelihood of a proposal being awarded decreases significantly. As stated in the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG), a PI's failure to adhere to their requirements may result in the proposal being returned without review.³ Instances such as these are easily preventable, given the appropriate tools and resources that are readily available to the PA.

Other sponsors such as the DOE, DoD, and NIH have subsets to their organizations from which funding can be received, adding another layer of requirements that must be followed. The guidelines and terms and conditions associated with every sponsor are ever-changing, making it difficult for each PA to maintain an accurate and current checklist for use during the proposal submission process.

This capstone project focuses on reviewing the current policies and procedures in place within the COE to enhance the proposal submission process by developing procedures for the engineering departmental PAs. By doing so, a comprehensive proposal guide specific to the COE will be developed to provide a firm foundation for all PAs, regardless of department, years of experience, and educational background, to reference during all stages of proposal preparation and submission.

³ National Science Foundation. 2019. "Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide". Accessed September 29, 2019. https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg19_1/nsf19_1.pdf

1.3. Project Questions.

What can be done to enhance the proposal submission process for the engineering departmental PA?

What content is needed for the development of a comprehensive proposal guide specific to the COE?

Although the proposal preparation and submission process may seem straightforward to those unfamiliar with the specifics, there is a great amount of detail associated with each individual proposal. This is determined by a variety of factors, such as the seven factors listed below:

1. Sponsor;
2. Solicitation Requirements;
3. Institutional Requirements;
4. Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-PIs;
5. Collaborative vs. Non-Collaborative Proposals;
6. PA Workload; and
7. Submission Timeline.

In order to gain a better understanding of the implications associated with each factor, each of the seven factors needs to be individually considered.

Every sponsor will be unique, requiring the PA to gain a strong foundation in the common requirements associated with each. This involves reviewing sponsor specific guides such as the NSF PAPPG and NASA's Guide for proposers. The information contained in these

guides will remain constant across all proposal submissions, making them a necessary reference for all PAs.

In addition to the requirements and guidelines outlined in the sponsor-specific guides, there are also solicitation requirements that must be adhered to. Unlike the guidelines and requirements listed in the individual sponsor guides, solicitation specific requirements will be more stringent and must be reviewed each time a new solicitation is presented for proposal submission.

Institutional requirements are unique to each IHE and are applicable to every proposal that is submitted. At UF, “The Principal Investigator (PI) is required to commit effort on all sponsored projects per UF’s policy. It is expected that the PI has a minimum commitment of effort (1-2%) to the project during each reporting period either charged as direct cost or cost shared.”⁴ If there are instances in which the sponsor does not require an effort commitment, the PI must then cost share that one percent commitment as required by UF.

In addition to the effort commitment required, UF implemented a proposal deadline policy in an effort to discourage last-minute submission requests. According to the Office of Research (OR),

Submit-ready proposals must be submitted to the Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) by 9 a.m. the business day prior to the sponsor’s published submission deadline to be considered on-time by DSP. Absent of extenuating circumstances, any proposal submitted after the internal deadline will not be submitted by the university to the sponsor. This policy applies to any sponsored program whose solicitation is published by the sponsor at least 30 calendar days prior to the sponsor’s due date.⁵

⁴ University of Florida. 2019. “Salaries & Wages”. Accessed October 2, 2019.
<https://research.ufl.edu/dsp/proposals/budgeting/salaries-wages.html>

⁵ University of Florida. 2019. “Proposal Deadline Policy”. Accessed October 2, 2019.
<https://research.ufl.edu/dsp/proposals/proposal-deadline-policy.html>

The COE has also created an informal internal deadline requesting that PIs submit all necessary documentation associated with a proposal two days prior to the DSP deadline. Such documentation includes the associated Statement of Work (SOW), budget, any sponsor required documentation and completion of proposal descriptors in the UFIRST module. The proposal must also be reviewed and approved by the PI and leadership within all departments of associated faculty prior to the DSP deadline. This COE informal internal deadline was put in place to give the PA enough time to complete the proposal prior to the DSP deadline and perform a quality review to ensure all necessary information and documentation needed by the sponsor and the university is included.

The number of PIs and Co-Principal Investigator's (Co-PI) associated with a proposal can substantially increase the difficulty level, especially if they are not all located within the same department or the COE. Increasing the number of individuals that are responsible for providing information to the PA can create unwanted delays, as the PA is now dependent on many others for necessary information. In addition, a collaboration between UF and an outside institution requires additional documentation to be completed and frequent correspondence with the other institution(s) PA.

PA workload can create an inability to dedicate the necessary amount of time to proposal preparation during high-volume periods. Given the fact that the PA workload is going to fluctuate frequently and be unique to every department, it can be difficult to anticipate when this will become an issue. While some sponsors, such as NIH, may have deadlines that run on a cycle, others are solicitation specific, making it difficult to anticipate workload until a PI notifies the PA of their intent to submit to the solicitation.

The submission timeline is affected by all of the aforementioned items and is a key aspect of the overall proposal preparation and submission process. The UF and COE work diligently to ensure that PAs, both at the central office and departmental levels, have ample time to complete and review each proposal before it is submitted. Creating an environment that is conducive to starting early and planning ahead is beneficial to the PI, PA, and DSP staff. Although there will always be one-off scenarios and instances in which last-minute submissions may not be preventable, encouraging a shift from these being the institutional norm is key.

Taking each of these factors into consideration and analyzing how they all relate to one another within the proposal preparation and submission process creates a base for determining what needs to be included within the COE specific proposal handbook. As the field of research administration is continuously evolving and sponsor-specific requirements are ever-changing, ensuring that the proposal handbook is a tool that can be utilized for training of new PAs, as well as a resource for more seasoned PAs, is imperative. This is achieved by creating sections within the proposal handbook that cater to each of these areas. For those that are just starting out as a PA, the inclusion of UF specific guidelines and requirements, UFIRST guidance, and a glossary of frequently utilized terminology are beneficial. Branching out from those basics to include guidelines associated with various sponsors, templates for commonly requested documentation, and checklists for the most frequently submitted to sponsors creates numerous tools and resources both new and veteran PAs can utilize. While utilization of the proposal handbook is not required, it does create a uniformed resource that can aid in creating consistency and encourage the creation of other tools and resources, supporting the continued growth of COE PAs.

Enhancing the proposal submission process for engineering departmental PAs is imperative to ensuring proposals of the highest quality are submitted on a consistent basis. Taking each factor into consideration and creating a uniformed set of tools and resources for all PAs to reference will ensure this goal is accomplished.

1.4. Project Objectives.

The objectives for the development of a comprehensive proposal guide specific to the COE included the following:

- A better understanding of sponsor-specific proposal guidelines and requirements
- Creation of a COE specific proposal handbook for all PAs to reference
- Implementation of uniformed documentation
- Prevention of last-minute proposal submissions

1.5. Significance.

Over the past three years, the COE has submitted in excess of 3,000 proposals, averaging approximately 800 per year. As these submissions include federal, industry, non-profit, and state governments, there is a significant amount of pressure on the PA to have the necessary knowledge, experience, and resources to ensure the highest quality proposal is submitted each time.

In addition to the number of proposals being submitted, the complexity and difficulty level of many proposals is also increasing. This makes it difficult for PAs to put the necessary amount of quality review into each proposal prior to submission. An article by Cayuse reiterates

the fact that research administration is not a low-stress career, but that through the use of consistent procedures and good organization, a well-rounded balance can be found.³

Preventing burn-out, while maintaining productivity can be a difficult aspect for PAs to navigate, however, by creating a COE proposal handbook, as well as uniformed documentation, each PA will have the resources necessary to ensure every proposal submitted meets all guidelines and requirements. The author of this Capstone Project believes that the creation of the handbook will result in an increase in the quality of proposals going out, not only making them more competitive, but also provide the PA with consistency in an otherwise inconsistent and unpredictable work environment.

1.6. Exclusions and Limitations.

As this Capstone Project specifically addresses enhancing the proposal submission process for engineering departmental PAs within UF, the population associated with it is limited to COE PAs, faculty, and UFs Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) staff. While each plays a different role in the overall proposal submission process, all are imperative to ensuring the proposal meets all guidelines and requirements prior to submission.

The COE PAs are the primary focus of this case study and the overwhelming majority of information gathered via the interviews and survey being conducted comes from these individuals. The COE is comprised of ten departments, with over twenty centers and institutes. These departments, centers, and institutes are serviced by a total of 17 research administrators, each responsible for pre-award duties within their designated department.

As of 2017, there were 269 faculty assigned to the COE, with a vast majority having active research portfolio's.⁶ The feedback gathered from various faculty assigned to different departments within the COE allows for valuable insight that will aid in creating tools and resources for the engineering departmental PA. Gaining a better understanding of the needs of the PI and the areas in which improvement could be made to the proposal process is vital to ensuring the resources put in place are all-encompassing and beneficial to all parties.

Additional feedback is also obtained from those within DSP, specifically responsible for COE proposal review. This feedback allows for insight as it relates to common errors or pitfalls DSP staff may see in COE proposals. As part of DSPs review process, there are several items that are taken into consideration for each proposal. Below is an outline detailing what DSP staff is looking for when completing the quality assurance review; it is important to note, these are not all-inclusive.

- As provided by PI and study team and as time allows, review any proposal solicitation for contractual exceptions, representations and certifications, and other common institutional requirements. Communicate common pitfalls or unusual requirements to the PI and Department Administration.
- As provided by PI and study team and as time allows, perform the final review of the proposal before submission to the sponsor. As time allows, DSP will:
 - Confirm the institutional data presented
 - Confirm the appropriate F&A rate and any justification for deviations from the federally negotiated rate are included

⁶ University of Florida. 2018. "Facts & Figures". Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://www.eng.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HWCOE-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

- Confirm the proper fringe benefit rates are included
- Confirm that the proposal meets the solicitation requirements for page limitations, cost limitations, and other proposal limitations⁷

⁷ University of Florida. 2019. "Proposal Preparation & Submission". Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://research.ufl.edu/dsp/proposals.html>

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Literature Review.

As this Capstone Project is focused on enhancing the proposal submission process for engineering departmental PAs at UF, there is limited literature available that is directly related to this study. Although this limits the available resources for review, there is literature available related to factors that impact the proposal submission process within the COE. The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) and Society of Research Administrators International (SRAI) provide sources of literature used in support of this project.

2.2. Details of review.

A recent article posted by NCURA, *Adopting a Growth Mindset in Research Administration to Create New Horizons*, discusses many aspects of research administration that directly impact PAs. The idea that research administration is a dynamic field, with fluid changes both internally and externally, reiterates the need for PAs to be versatile. It also reinforces the need for all RAs to be supportive of one another and institute tools and resources that are readily accessible by all. As the article mentions, research administration can also be a stressful career, especially for a PA where day-to-day activities are deadline-driven. Encouraging IHEs to go the extra step and create unit specific tools and resources, such as a proposal handbook, can help to ease the frequent changes put in place by sponsors and relieve unnecessary stressors associated with responsibilities of a PA.⁸

⁸ Jamie Sprague and Isabella DiFranzo (2019). "Adopting a Growth Mindset in Research Administration to Create New Horizons". NCURA Magazine, 51(4), 4-5.

Another article published in the NCURA magazine entitled, *Pre-Award Turmoil: How Resilience Can Lead the Way*, emphasizes how certain aspects of pre-award administration can create unwanted turmoil for the PA. Last-minute notice of an intent to submit from PIs, changing landscape within a unit, and assignment of additional duties can all create an environment that may make a PA feel as though they are being overworked or unable to succeed. Maintaining resiliency and understanding the items that are within the realm of control is an important aspect of being a successful PA. Providing tools and resources that each PA can utilize to mitigate the ever-changing landscape of research administration will create an environment in which PAs will feel comfortable, confident, and successful.⁹

Grant-writing, although not a current responsibility of COE PAs, is an aspect of the overall proposal preparation and submission process that cannot be overlooked. According to an article in the SRA International Journal of Research Administration entitled, *Grant Proposal Preparation Readiness: A Glimpse at the Education Level of Higher Education Faculty*, current grant-writing services provided by Sponsored Programs offices are underwhelming, and in need of improvement.¹⁰ Although the level of involvement each Sponsored Programs office is going to provide to PIs related to the grant-writing portion of a proposal will vary, it is an area of the proposal preparation process that needs to be explored further. For COE PAs the current workload may not afford the ability to assist PIs with this aspect currently; however, it is something that could be considered when looking for additional training and growth opportunities for COE PAs. Compilation of the budget and budget justification is a significant

⁹ Anthony Beckman and Theresa Caban (2018). "Pre-Award Turmoil: How Resilience Can Lead the Way". NCURA Magazine, 50(3), 35-36.

¹⁰ Kristin M. Shuman (2019). "Grant Proposal Preparation Readiness: A Glimpse at the Education Level of Higher Education Faculty". SRAI Journal of Research Administration, Volume L, Number 1.

aspect of the proposal preparation process for COE PAs and is derived directly from the SOW. Having a better understanding of the grant-writing process, as well as increased knowledge of the technical aspects of the proposals COE PAs are working on, may enhance the proposal preparation process for both COE PAs and COE faculty as well.¹¹

Enhancing the proposal preparation and submission process for COE PAs is not limited to the creation of tools and resources for use during the actual act of proposal preparation. A 2014 article in the NCURA Research Management Review Journal entitled, *Leadership and Research Administration*, details several characteristics of an effective leader. As stated in the article, “A leader is not expected to be an expert in all areas, but the best leaders will surround themselves with people who have strengths in different areas. The collective whole and not the individual comprise a strong team”. To enhance the proposal preparation and submission process for COE PAs means that PAs from all departments within the COE work together to create a team of leaders within the field of pre-award research administration. Each PA has the ability to positively contribute to the tools and resources, support groups, and professional development opportunities within the COE and by harnessing the qualities of each PA the COE will continue to set the precedent for effective pre-award administration.¹²

2.3. Applicability of Literature Review.

The literature selected in support of this case study is directly related as it sheds light on the day-to-day issues a PA faces within the COE. For those unfamiliar with the proposal preparation and submission process, it can be difficult to understand the impact that last-minute

¹¹ Kristin M. Shuman (2019). “Grant Proposal Preparation Readiness: A Glimpse at the Education Level of Higher Education Faculty”. SRAI Journal of Research Administration, Volume L, Number 1.

¹² Miriam A. Campo (2014). “Leadership and Research Administration.” Research Management Review, Volume 20, Number 1

requests to submit from PIs, changes in departmental procedures, and increases in workload have on a PA. While the nature of pre-award administration is deadline-driven and involves many aspects that are uncontrollable by the PA, the literature selected shows that there are ways in which PAs can create an environment that encourages resiliency and supports continuous growth. Enhancing the proposal submission process for COE PAs by creating tools and resources such as a unit-specific proposal handbook, will ensure that PAs continue to support COE faculty at the highest level while navigating the ever-changing research administration landscape.

Chapter 3. Need(s) Assessment

3.1. Need(s) Assessment.

With the COE submitting more than 3,000 proposals over the past three years, it is imperative that departmental PAs have the tools and resources necessary to submit proposals of the highest quality with each submission. Although there are resources currently available from within UF, these are not COE specific. These resources include the newly developed University of Florida Research Administrator Portal (UF RAP) and UFIRST training manual. While these do provide a starting point for PAs, they are not all-encompassing and do not factor in the nuances associated with COE sponsors. The UFIRST training manual is beneficial for guidance when completing the proposal module or entering an award. UF RAP provides a wide array of tools and resources for the research administration community as a whole, addressing UF specific requirements, funding opportunities, proposal toolkits, award set-up and management, and frequently utilized facts.

As the COE continues to grow and faculty expand their research portfolios, the need for tools and resources customized to meet the needs of both the COE faculty and departmental PAs is necessary. By creating a proposal handbook that can serve as a one-stop-shop for all PAs to reference across the COE, encompassing items such as sponsor-specific checklists, a uniform budget template, and internal links for reference will increase the efficiency and quality of each proposal every time.

3.1.1 Assessment of Need.

The need for this Capstone Project was assessed by looking at the current tools and resources available for PAs within the COE and comparing that to the current needs

of departmental PAs. Given the fluid nature of research administration and the ever-changing requirements of sponsors, it was determined that this Capstone Project would benefit COE PAs by supporting enhancement to the current proposal preparation and submission process within the COE.

3.2. Metrics.

As this Capstone Project is specific to UF, the metrics utilized are derived primarily from internal reports, as well as the feedback obtained from PAs within the COE. The interviews and surveys conducted with faculty and PAs from the COE, as well as staff from DSP, are additional resources utilized to support the need for this Capstone Project.

3.3. Sources.

Consultation between departmental PAs assigned to the COE and the author were utilized to determine the need for this Capstone Project. As the COE continues to grow and recruitment of new faculty continues, enhancing the proposal submission process for departmental PAs within the COE is necessary. This will allow departmental PAs within the COE to continue providing exceptional service to COE faculty while mitigating the frequent changes in sponsor requirements, fluctuation in proposal submission workload, and last-minute submission requests.

Chapter 4. Project Description

4.1. Discussion of project elements.

The completion of this capstone project is intended to develop a handbook with tools and resources that can be utilized to enhance the proposal submission process for the engineering departmental PA. Out of the sixteen Colleges at UF, the COE is currently one of the top three research units on campus.¹³ This achievement speaks to the volume and quality of proposals that are being submitted by COE faculty with the assistance of COE PAs. To support the continued success of the COE, enhancing the proposal submission process for the PAs not only increases the quality of every proposal that is submitted, but it also provides additional guidance and resources that every PA, regardless of experience can benefit from. Although every PA is likely to create processes and checklists that cater to individual needs and preferences, it is important that there be consistency amongst all PAs within the COE. As there are many tools and resources that can be utilized to achieve consistency, the development of a proposal handbook, inclusive of COE and UF guidelines, sponsor checklists, and uniformed templates is key. To create a proposal handbook that each PA within the COE can benefit from, the author of this capstone project surveyed faculty and staff at UF. Those surveyed include COE faculty, COE PAs, and DSP staff, each ensuring key aspects of the proposal submission process are met at every stage. By including the information obtained from those surveyed, the COE proposal handbook is a unique resource that addresses the desires of faculty, while supporting the needs of COE PAs.

¹³ University of Florida. 2019. "About". Accessed October 19, 2019. <https://www.eng.ufl.edu/about/>

Chapter 5. Methodology

5.1. Methodology Overview.

The methods that were utilized to conduct and complete this capstone project were a combination of the following items:

- Review of existing resources currently available to PAs within the COE
- Completion of survey's by COE faculty, COE PAs, and DSP staff
- Comparison of resources available to COE PAs vs needs
- Creation of a COE specific proposal handbook

By taking each of the aforementioned items into consideration during the completion of this capstone project, the author was able to create a proposal handbook that addresses the needs of COE PAs, enhancing the overall proposal submission process. With the COE submitting proposals to a variety of sponsors, providing PAs with tools and resources that provide guidance during every step of the proposal submission process helps to ensure a quality proposal is submitted every time with the best possible opportunity of being selected for funding.

5.2. Project Design and Discussion.

At the onset of this capstone project, the author reviewed the current tools and resources available for COE PAs. This review included resources that are readily available internally within the COE, as well as those accessible via institutional sources such as UFs newly created Research Administration Portal (UF RAP). Although these resources provide a good starting point for those seeking additional guidance and assistance with various research administration items, there are limited comprehensive resources available directly related to the needs of COE

PAs. As every College within an IHE is going to have a unique set of sponsors that are commonly submitted to, the resources that are needed for each is going to vary. With this being the case, it is not realistic to assume that an IHE can provide tools and resources that are all-encompassing of PA needs related to each individual College. Resources such as this are best created at the individual unit level, as the unit is most familiar with the needs of unit faculty and sponsors.

To create COE PA specific tools and resources, such as a proposal handbook, the author created a voluntary survey for COE faculty, COE PAs, and DSP staff related to the proposal development and submission process. The information obtained from the survey was an integral part of determining the areas that are addressed and the items included within the COE proposal handbook. By gathering these details it ensures the most comprehensive proposal handbook is available for PAs and encourages an environment supportive of collaboration amongst faculty, PAs, and DSP staff.

5.3. Discussion of Questionnaire.

As part of the process associated with the development of a proposal handbook, the author reached out to COE PAs, COE faculty, and DSP staff via a survey. As each of these individuals is responsible for different aspects of the proposal preparation and submission process, the questions included in the survey vary. In order to provide insight as to the type of information the author felt would be useful when developing the proposal handbook, the questions associated with each of the surveys are provided below. It is important to note that participation was strictly voluntary and the identity of those participating is confidential.

5.3.1. Departmental Research Administrator Survey

The questions listed below were sent to PAs assigned to various departments within the COE. The feedback obtained from these surveys provided the author with a clearer understanding of the various pre-award tasks in relation to individual departments within the COE. Obtaining data pertaining to how long an individual has been a PA, the number of faculty served, number of proposals averaged by said PA per month and the overall number of PAs within a given department allowed the author to gain a general idea of the average workload by the department. Information related to the way in which proposal requests are received, the average lead time that is provided, current internal deadlines in place for proposal submission, and what each PA considers to be a late proposal submission request were imperative to determining what procedures could be put into place to ease the burden on PAs associated with these areas. Gaining insight as to how many PAs have created personal checklists, steps each PA takes that may differ from others within the COE, and any Quality Assurance (QA) processes currently in place at a departmental level provided a basis for the author to create a proposal handbook that is beneficial to each and every PA, encompassing attributes that each PA finds important.

1. How long have you been a pre-award administrator?
2. How many faculty do you serve?
3. How many proposals do you average per month?
4. How many pre-award administrators are in your department?
5. What is the average lead time you receive for proposal submission?

6. Do you have a proposal checklist? If so, is it one generic checklist or do you have various ones for different sponsors? Please describe below.
7. Please describe below what you consider a late proposal submission request?
8. Do you have internal departmental deadlines for proposal submission?
 - a. If yes, what is that deadline?
9. How do you receive proposal requests from your faculty?
10. Do you have a process for determining workload?
 - a. If yes, please describe your process below.
11. Do you have a QA process in place within your department prior to submission?
 - a. If yes, please describe the process below.
12. What would you say you do as an RA working on proposals that might differ from RAs in other engineering departments? Please describe below.

5.3.2. Principal Investigator Survey

In order to ensure the needs of faculty members within the COE are met, the author surveyed several faculty to gain insight and feedback as it relates to faculty-specific items during the proposal submission process. By gaining details associated with the number of proposal submissions a faculty member averages a year and determining what is considered a late proposal submission request from a faculty member's perspective, the author was able to compare that to the information obtained from the PAs surveyed. This comparison provides the opportunity to determine ways in which late submission requests can be mitigated and procedures put into place to discourage these when possible and ease the burden on all parties when unavoidable. Information

related to the sponsor's faculty members are submitting to the least/most frequently and the items that a faculty member takes into consideration when determining which calls to respond to is vital to the development of relevant and useful checklists. As the proposal handbook created as a result of this capstone project is intended to be a resource encompassing all items associated with the proposal submission process, the inclusion of sponsor-specific checklists and templates (when applicable) is of high importance. Knowing the sponsors that many COE faculty are frequently submitting to allows the author to ensure the checklists included in the proposal handbook are useful and pertinent to the workload of COE PAs.

1. How many proposal submissions do you average per year?
2. Please describe below what you consider a late proposal submission request?
3. Name the sponsor below you believe you submit to most frequently?
4. Name the sponsor below you believe you submit to least frequently?
5. What factors do you consider when deciding to respond to a call? Please describe below.

5.3.3. Core Office Survey

In addition to surveying COE faculty and COE PAs, the author requested the feedback of DSP staff responsible for the review of COE proposals prior to formal submission to the sponsor. The feedback attained from those within DSP allowed the author to have a better understanding of areas in which COE PAs could improve to ensure the proposals being submitted for review are of the highest quality. Inquiring as to DSP internal deadlines and the benefits these provide, understanding the specific aspects of the proposal submission process DSP is responsible for, and gaining details associated

with the most common errors DSP typically find when completing a pre-submission review, provided the author with a better understanding of what types of tools and resources would be most beneficial to a COE PA. As many PAs utilize checklists as part of the proposal preparation process, understanding what type of checklist(s) may be in use by DSP staff when reviewing proposals prior to submission and comparing that to the number of proposals returned without review by sponsors is very beneficial. While there may not be a direct correlation between the two, it does provide an opportunity to determine key items that should be included when creating a proposal submission checklist. In an effort to mitigate the number of last-minute proposal requests COE PAs receive, the author also inquired as to the success rate of last-minute proposal submissions. Gathering this type of data is useful when working to create procedures that support an environment conducive to timely submissions.

1. What are some common errors you see in proposals? Please list below.
2. Do you have an internal deadline for proposal submission in place?
 - a. If yes, what is that deadline?
3. Do you feel that this is beneficial?
4. What aspects of the proposal submission process are you responsible for?
5. How receptive are departments to your feedback?
6. While reviewing proposals, do you have a standard checklist you use?
7. How many proposals have you seen returned without review from sponsors over the past 6 months?
8. In the proposals that are returned without review, are there common errors that result in their return? Please describe below.

9. Have you noticed a correlation between last minute proposal submissions and success rates? Please describe below.

Chapter 6. Project Results and Discussion

PAs within the COE are responsible for assisting PIs with proposal preparation and submission to a wide array of sponsors. The diverse nature and continued growth of the COE ensure that PAs will see no shortage of new and unique proposal requirements. Given that there are multiple departments that comprise the COE, each departmental PA is going to have specific needs and experiences dependent upon the department the PA is assigned to. The same can be said for Sponsored Program Administrators (SPA) working at DSP and for COE PIs. The information obtained from the surveys sent to these individuals was utilized by the author of this capstone project to develop tools and resources that address the needs and enhance the proposal preparation and submission process for all.

6.1. Departmental Research Administrator Survey Results

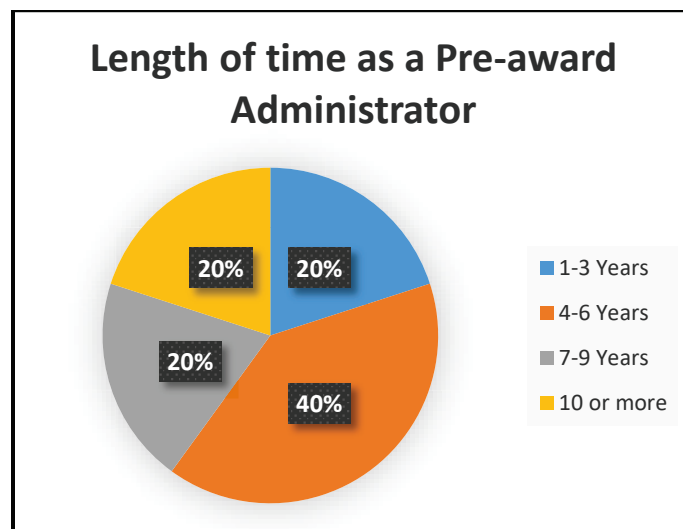
The field of research administration has grown significantly over the past years and as such, the need for well-qualified and experienced PAs continues to increase. According to the NCURA article by Thomas J. Roberts, Daniel Campo, and Jennifer Shambrook, *Starting Small and Growing: The Profession of Research Administration and Graduate Higher Education Opportunities*, the once minimal number of research administrators has grown into the thousands.

Fast forward to 2015 where the professional field of research administration is comprised of thousands of people representing the majority of higher education institutions around the world. While the profession began with very few research administrators, it has grown to encompass thousands of people with constantly changing, increased, and varied responsibilities.¹⁴

¹⁴ Thomas J. Roberts, Daniel Campo, and Jennifer Shambrook (2016). "Starting Small and Growing: The Profession of Research Administration and Graduate Higher Education Opportunities". NCURA Magazine, 48(1), 20-22.

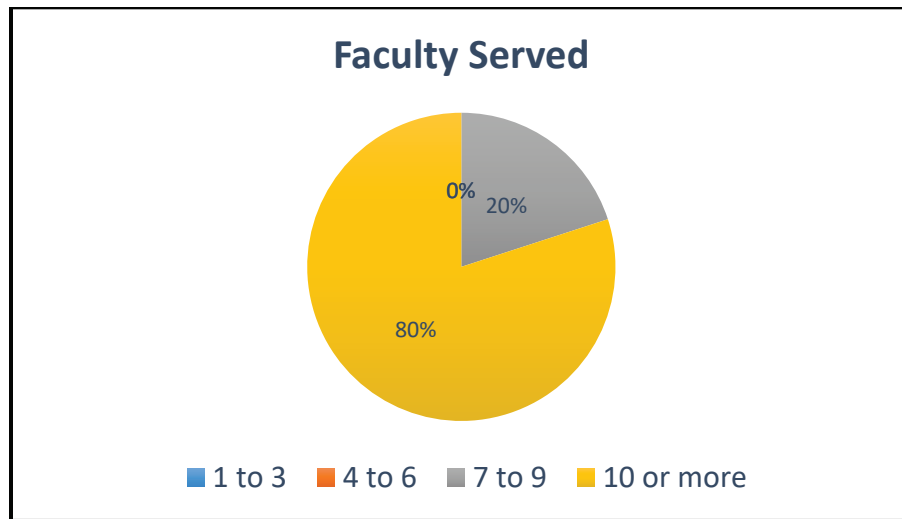
This consistent growth has created an environment welcoming of individuals from all professional backgrounds, encouraging those with little to no research administration experience to apply for the various positions found under the research administration umbrella. Of the COE PAs surveyed, 60% percent indicated having less than ten years of experience as a PA, while 40% had ten years or more experience. Figure one below reflects the various years of experience by the COE PAs that were surveyed.

Figure 1 Length of time as a Pre-award Administrator



Of the departments within the COE, each has a substantial number of faculty that the PAs are responsible for assisting with all aspects of the proposal preparation and submission process. The COE PAs surveyed indicated that eighty percent are responsible for serving more than ten faculty, with less than half having two or more PAs within the department. Figure 2 shows the number of faculty served by COE PAs.

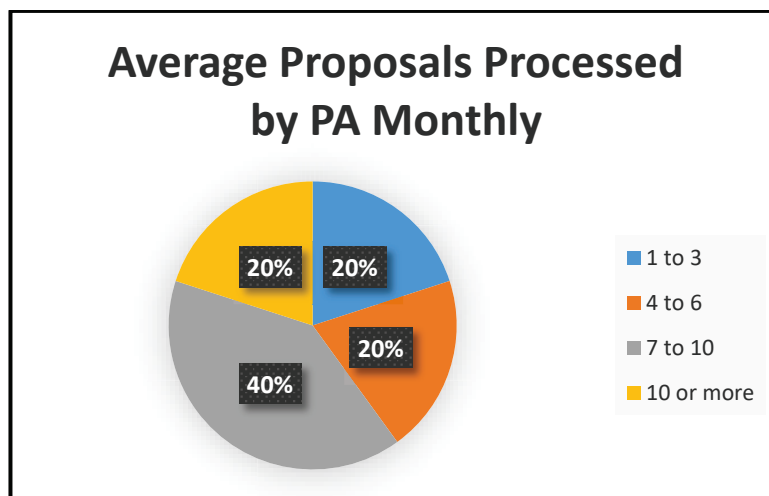
Figure 2 Number of Faculty Served by COE PAs



As each department varies in size, the number of PAs necessary to assist PIs depends greatly on the number of proposals being submitted by the faculty within that department.

Figure 3 shows the average number of proposals a PA works on during a month.

Figure 3 Average Proposals by PA Monthly



For those that serve smaller departments with faculty that submit proposals less frequently or submit to sponsors that require less detailed proposal information, having only one designated PA is sufficient. Instances in which the department is larger and has PIs that are

consistently submitting proposals to sponsors such as the DoD or DOE that commonly require detailed cost-proposals likely need more than one designated PA. Reviewing the workload of each PA on a consistent basis will help prevent burnout by the PA, decrease the likelihood of careless mistakes, and increase efficiency, ensuring continued success and quality proposal submission.

In addition to reviewing the workload of each PA, it is imperative that there are clear guidelines and procedures in place to handle a variety of situations that can arise during the proposal process. One such example is that of late proposal submission requests and the burden it places on the PA. What constitutes a late proposal submission request is inevitably going to vary depending upon whom you ask; each of the COE PAs surveyed provided different responses to this question. This can create difficulty for departmental, college, and institutional leadership when working to implement a policy to mitigate late requests. While the COE and DSP have each implemented internal deadlines for proposal submissions prior to the sponsor-specific submission deadline, there are still individuals that may feel this rule is either not stringent enough, or not applicable. As with any guideline or requirement, there is sure to be pushback; however, creating a dialogue and an opportunity for all parties to voice their concerns and thoughts can aid in creating a policy that all can feel is fair and beneficial.

Of the information obtained from the departmental PA surveys, the feedback provided regarding the checklists currently in use by COE PAs revealed only NSF and NIH checklists are typically being utilized during the proposal preparation process. Although NSF and NIH proposals are amongst the most commonly submitted to and relatively most straightforward, the need for resources available for the PAs to reference when completing proposals in response to DoD and DoE solicitations does exist. While the ability to create one uniformed checklist for

DoD and DoE solicitations is not necessarily feasible, as they are going to vary each and every time, the development of guidance for completion of these types of proposals would be very beneficial. Given that sixty percent of the COE PAs surveyed indicated completion of seven proposals or more each month, there are instances in which other RAs within a department, not typically tasked with pre-award administration, may need to complete proposals when the workload is unusually high or unforeseen circumstances occur. Having resources available such as checklists and sponsor-specific guidance located in one single document, such as a proposal handbook, will allow any RA the ability to complete a proposal even when pre-award administration is not that individual's primary function.

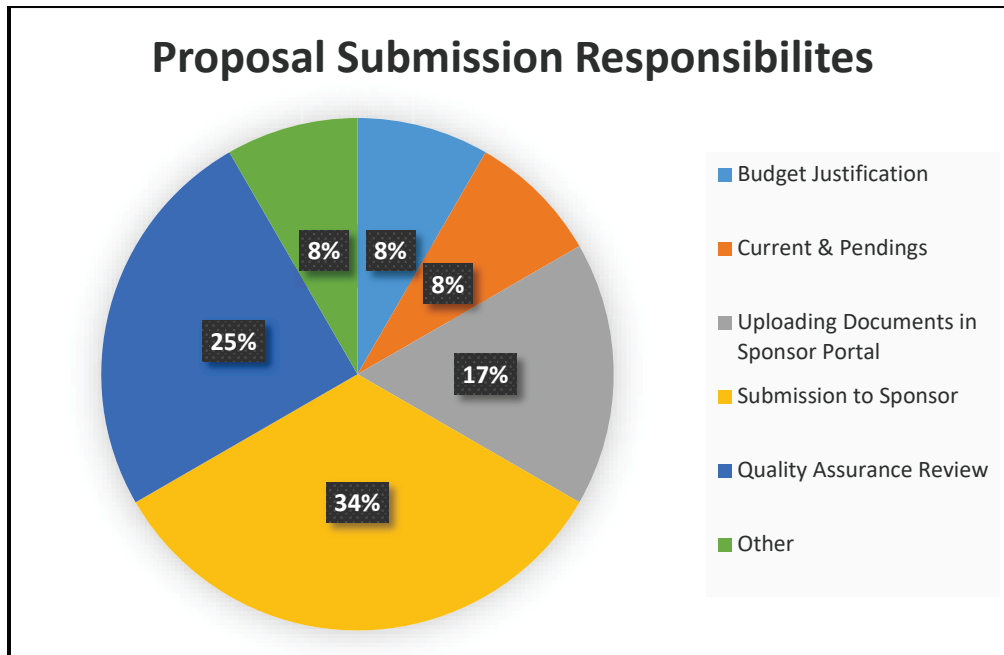
6.2. Core Office Survey Results

While the proposal preparation process is primarily handled within the COE and its various departments by COE PAs, the formal submission of the completed proposal is primarily facilitated by DSP. Prior to the submission of the completed proposal, DSP is responsible for reviewing each one to determine if all institutional and sponsor guidelines and requirements have been met. In order to determine the areas in which improvement could be made by COE PAs, individuals at DSP were surveyed.

To have a clear understanding of what DSP is responsible for reviewing prior to formal submission of the proposal, the individuals surveyed were also asked what aspects of the proposal submission process take place within DSP. According to the survey results twenty-five percent of individuals surveyed were responsible for aspects of proposal preparation associated with budget justifications and current and pending documents, fifty-percent for uploading necessary documentation into sponsor-specific portals, and seventy-five percent for completing a quality assurance review of the entire proposal. All surveyed indicated being responsible for

formal submission to the sponsor. Figure 4 Proposal Submission Responsibilities reflects the number of DSP staff surveyed that perform the listed functions which include budget justification, current and pending support, uploading of documents in sponsor portal, submission to sponsor, and quality assurance as part of the proposal submission process.

Figure 4 Proposal Submission Responsibilities



To expand on this, additional information was requested as it relates to the common errors those within DSP are seeing on proposals submitted by COE PAs. Common errors listed were citing the wrong Indirect Cost Rate (IDC), missing required documentation, inconsistencies between the budget and the budget justification and inclusion of cost-share when it is not mandatory. This data is very beneficial when working to create resources that COE PAs can utilize during the proposal preparation process. It also provides insight as to areas in which additional training may be beneficial for COE PAs to aid in the prevention of these types of errors in the future, resulting in a reduced turn-around time of submission to sponsors and an increase to proposal quality. It is important to note that responses to the receptiveness of DSP

data by the departments resulted in varying answers from those surveyed at DSP. Based on this data, it is important to establish a good rapport and open communication between not only COE PAs but the COE faculty and DSP as well. Although those housed in DSP are not directly under the COE umbrella, everyone is a part of the greater UF team and as such, should be supportive and helpful to one another. Creating an inclusive, team environment between each department within the COE and DSP will help all parties grow as RAs.

6.3. Principal Investigator Survey Results

Although the COE PAs and DSP staff play crucial roles in the proposal preparation and submission process, in order to enhance this process in a way that not only benefits the COE PAs but the COE faculty as well, COE faculty were surveyed.

Of the COE faculty surveyed, all indicated submitting to a funding source between four to six proposals each year. While four to six proposals a year may not seem like an overwhelming number at face value, the timing in which these proposals are being submitted must be taken into account. It is not uncommon for many faculty within the same department to submit to the same solicitation, resulting in a significant number of proposals going out at the same time. Add to that the strong likelihood that these proposals will include collaboration between various faculty within different COE departments or outside institutions and the difficulty level increases. Creating tools and resources that are uniformed across all departments within the COE can help to streamline the proposal preparation process and create consistency amongst all COE PAs. By doing so, it is very likely that the efficiency of proposal preparation will increase, and possibly free-up time in which COE PAs can explore other aspects of research administration, gaining insight and knowledge that is beneficial to the COE as a whole.

Given the recent implementation of internal submission deadlines by UF and the COE, it was important to seek feedback from COE faculty regarding what each considered a “late” proposal submission request. The responses to this varied amongst those surveyed, with some considering anything within two days of the sponsor deadline as late and others feeling as though anything between five and seven days of the sponsor deadline is late. Additional feedback provided also mentioned the importance of the PI notifying COE PAs as soon as possible once the intent to submit is determined, in order to provide as much lead time as possible for proposal preparation. This feedback provides the perspective of COE faculty and can aid in the creation of resources that may be able to help mitigate the occurrence of late proposal submission requests even further. While the current internal deadlines have certainly created a decrease in the number of late requests, continued communication between both COE faculty, COE PAs, departmental leadership, and DSP will ensure further resources can be created to mitigate late proposal submission requests.

Chapter 7. Recommendations and Discussion

7.1. Introduction

In order to ensure that the information obtained during this capstone project is utilized in a manner that supports growth and development for COE PAs, there are several recommendations that should be taken into consideration. Among these are the development of an engineering-specific proposal handbook, the creation of a Quality Assurance Group (QAG) responsible for proposal review prior to DSP submission, and a PA support group that meets quarterly.

7.2. Recommendations

7.2.1. Recommendation 1: COE should Develop a Proposal Handbook

Given the nature of the proposal preparation and submission process it is clear that COE should develop a proposal handbook. The development of this handbook should be a high priority. There are several tools and resources that can be identified and utilized to aid PAs in their jobs. As opposed to having these resources spread across a variety of platforms, the creation of a proposal handbook allows PAs to access multiple resources in one location. Items included in the handbook are UF specific requirements related to the proposal process, sponsor specific guidance and requirements, and various checklists associated with commonly submitted to sponsors.

7.2.2. Recommendation 2: COE should Create a Quality Assurance Group

As the COE continues to grow and faculty research portfolios diversify, the need for a designated group of PAs responsible for quality assurance is increasing. While many institutions have created QAGs for various other aspects of the research

administration process, they appear to be an under-utilized resource that may provide several benefits to COE PAs. Individuals assigned to the QAG would be responsible for quality checking proposals prior to submission for core office review. This would be beneficial for more complex proposals, such as those typically associated with DoD, DOE, and DARPA.

In addition to reviewing proposals prior to DSP review, the QAG would be responsible for the update and maintenance of the proposal handbook. Ideally, those assigned to the QAG would be seasoned PAs with a variety of experience and knowledge, ensuring the proposal handbook contains the most beneficial and relevant material for COE PAs at all times. It is the expectation that this maintenance would occur on an as-needed basis, as well as annually, to provide the COE PAs with updated materials that can be used for reference during the proposal preparation and submission process.

Further responsibilities of the QAG would include serving as back-up to all departmental COE PAs when needed. Although those assigned to the QAG would still be located within the departments each is primarily assigned to, when proposal assistance is needed by others within the COE, the QAG would be expected to provide this needed support.

7.2.3. Recommendation 3: COE should create a PA Support Group

While it is common practice for each department within the COE to hold routine meetings for research administration staff, these may not always be separated by pre and post-award functions. In order to provide continued guidance and updates on recent changes that have occurred within the COE and UF, as well as those released by various

sponsors, the creation of a PA support group (PASG) within the COE would be beneficial. Ideally, this group would be overseen by individuals assigned to the QAG, as the upkeep of the proposal handbook and review of proposals prior to submission correlate with the types of items addressed within the PASG. These meetings would allow the QAG to share updates and changes, address frequent errors, and provide an opportunity for all COE PAs to meet and discuss any questions or concerns. It is imperative that every PA has a network of individuals to reach out to when questions arise, or a second opinion is needed. The PASG would provide this support and encourage growth and development amongst COE PAs.

7.2.4. Recommendation 4: COE should Establish Cross-training for DSP staff and COE PAs

Although COE PAs and DSP staff may have a general understanding of the roles and responsibilities each is tasked with, there are still ways in which the relationship between the two can be improved. While it is commonplace for new RAs to mentor and shadow other RAs within the same department or College, it is not common for DSP staff and COE PAs to shadow each other. By design, central offices such as DSP are intended to provide services to an entire campus, oftentimes placing DSP staff on an “island”. Although this does not impact the ability of DSP staff and COE PAs to work together during the proposal preparation and submission process, it does limit the level of understanding each may have of the others' day-to-day functions. The creation of a cross-training program for DSP staff and COE PAs would increase the flow of communication between the two and help COE PAs better understand the proposal review process prior to submission. This will allow COE PAs to ask questions, gain

clarification, and share scenarios or examples of unique circumstances with DSP staff. Including this cross-training experience as part of the on-boarding process for all COE PAs would aid in establishing an open flow of communication between DSP and the new PA, provide further proposal training that may not be readily accessible within the departmental environment, and strengthen the collaboration and team environment between DSP staff and COE PAs.

7.2.5. Recommendation 5: COE should have Uniformity Across Departments

With the frequency of cross-collaboration among departments within the COE being commonplace, it is the author's recommendation that uniformity related to templates and internal submission deadlines across all departments be established. By doing so, this will streamline the proposal preparation process across all departments within the COE and allow COE PAs the ability to easily assist PIs and prevent the sharing of conflicting information between departments. To establish this uniformity it is the author's recommendation that a COE specific budget template is created, as well as enforcement of the COE specific proposal deadline by all departments. Should a QAG be established within the COE, the PAs comprising this group will work together to create additional tools and resources that address the needs of all COE departments, for future use and implementation. As the needs of each department and the requirements by each sponsor are ever-changing, it is the author's suggestion that the tools and resources created by the QAG be reviewed annually. This uniformity across departments, along with increased communication between COE PAs, COE faculty, and DSP staff, will result in a continued decrease to late proposal submission requests and consistent high quality proposals every time.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

As the proposal preparation and submission process is an integral part of the overall award life cycle, this capstone project focused on ways in which the proposal submission process for COE PAs can be enhanced through the creation of additional tools and resources. In order to ensure these tools and resources provide COE PAs with the most beneficial information, the author of this capstone project utilized feedback obtained from surveys sent to various COE PAs, COE faculty, and DSP staff. This feedback, in conjunction with the author's personal experiences as a pre-award administrator, was then utilized to create a COE specific handbook for PAs to reference.

Other recommendations derived from the information obtained by the completed surveys was the creation of a Quality Assurance Group (QAG), as well as a Pre-Award Support Group (PASG), cross-training of COE PAs and DSP staff, and uniformity across departments. Both the QAG and PASG would create an environment in which PAs from various departments within the COE, could work together to ensure the proposal handbook is maintained, provide review and guidance of proposals prior to submission, and ensure continued support of an environment in which growth and development of COE PAs is promoted.

The information obtained through the completion of this capstone project was an integral part of the author's ability to determine areas in which the current proposal submission process for engineering departmental pre-award administrators could be enhanced. Feedback provided by other COE PAs, COE faculty, and DSP staff allowed for multiple perspectives to be taken into consideration. This ensures the recommended tools and resources developed will benefit COE PAs, ideally resulting in increased proposal quality, efficiency, and support of continued growth within the COE.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

1.1. Departmental RA Questionnaire

By completing this survey or questionnaire, you are consenting to be in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time. This questionnaire should not take more than 15 minutes of your time and the feedback you provide will be used in support of the Capstone Project Paper I am currently completing for the Master of Science Program in Research Administration at Johns Hopkins University. Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential and your participation is appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this Questionnaire, please contact me at wood.mc@ufl.edu. Thank you for your time.

1. How long have you been a pre-award administrator?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10 or more years
- ☐ Other: _____

2. How many faculty do you serve? *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-9
- ☐ 10 or more
- ☐ Other: _____

3. How many proposals do you average per month? *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 10 or more Other: _____
- ☐ _____

4. **How many pre-award administrators are in your department?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-2
- ☐ 2-4
- ☐ 5 or more
- ☐ Other: _____

5. **What is the average lead time you receive for proposal submission?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Less than 1 week
- ☐ 1-2 weeks
- ☐ 3-4 weeks
- ☐ 4 weeks or more
- ☐ Other: _____

6. **Do you have a proposal checklist? If so, is it one generic checklist or do you have various ones for different sponsors? Please describe below.**

7. **Please describe below what you consider a late proposal submission request?**

8. **Do you have internal departmental deadlines for proposal submission?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. **If yes, what is that deadline?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ One day before submission
- ☐ Two - five days before submission
- ☐ Six - ten days before submission
- ☐ Eleven or more days before submission

10. **How do you receive proposal requests from your faculty?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ UFIRST
- ☐ Other: _____

11. **Do you have a process for determining workload?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: _____

12. **If yes, please describe your process below.**

13. **Do you have a QA process in place within your department prior to submission?** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

14. **If yes, please describe the process below.**

15. What would you say you do as an RA working on proposals that might differ from RAs in other engineering departments? Please describe below.

1.2. Core Office Questionnaire

By completing this survey or questionnaire, you are consenting to be in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time. This questionnaire should not take more than 15 minutes of your time and the feedback you provide will be used in support of the Capstone Project Paper I am currently completing for the Master of Science Program in Research Administration at Johns Hopkins University. Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential and your participation is appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this Questionnaire, please contact me at wood.mc@ufl.edu. Thank you for your time.

1. **What are some common errors you see in proposals? Please list below.**

2. **Do you have an internal deadline for proposal submission in place?** *Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. **If yes, what is that deadline?** *Mark only one oval.*

☐ One day before submission deadline
☐ Two - five days before submission deadline
☐ Six - ten days before submission deadline
☐ Eleven or more days before submission deadline
☐ Other: _____

4. **Do you feel**

that this is beneficial? *Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: _____

5. **What aspects of the proposal submission process are you responsible for?**
Check all that apply.

- ☐ Budget and Justification
- ☐ Current & Pending
- ☐ Uploading of Documents in Sponsor Portals
- ☐ Submission to Sponsor Quality
- ☐ Assurance Review Other:
- ☐ _____

6. How receptive

are departments to your feedback? *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Very receptive
- ☐ Somewhat receptive
- ☐ Not receptive Other:
- ☐ _____

7. While

reviewing proposals, do you have a standard checklist you use? *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: _____

8. How many

proposals have you seen returned without review from sponsors over the past 6 months?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7 or more

9. In the proposals that are returned without review, are there common errors that result in their return? Please describe below.

10. Have you noticed a correlation between last minute proposal submissions and success rates? Please describe below.

1.3. Principal Investigator Questionnaire

By completing this survey or questionnaire, you are consenting to be in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time. This questionnaire should not take more than 15 minutes of your time and the feedback you provide will be used in support of the Capstone Project Paper I am currently completing for the Master of Science Program in Research Administration at Johns Hopkins University. Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential and your participation is appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this Questionnaire, please contact me at wood.mc@ufl.edu. Thank you for your time.

1. How many proposal submissions do you average per year? *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-3
☐ 4-6
☐ 7 or more

2. Please describe below what you consider a late proposal submission request?

3. Name the sponsor below you believe you submit to most frequently?

4. Name the sponsor below you believe you submit to least frequently?

5. What factors do you consider when deciding to respond to a call? Please describe below.



Pre-Award Administrators Handbook

(Subject to Change)

Authors Draft

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Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance related to the proposal development and submission processes for new and senior Research Administrators within the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering.

Authors Draft

Roles and Responsibilities

Within the University of Florida, there are many individuals that play a role in the proposal preparation and submission process. Below are details related to the roles and responsibilities of the departmental Research Administrator (RA), Principal Investigator (PI), and Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP).

Research Administrator (Pre-award):

- Reviews solicitation document for pertinent details
- Develops budget based off of PI needs required to complete Statement of Work
- Works with PI to create a budget justification detailing items included in budget
- Identifies any cost sharing commitments, i.e. mandatory/voluntary
- Reaches out to any sub-recipient institution(s) for necessary information and documentation
- Compiles Current and Pending document for PI review
- Ensures sponsor specific formatting requirements are followed on all proposal documents
- Requests PI certification of proposal via UFIRST
- Uploads all required proposal documentation to appropriate electronic system, i.e. grants.gov, Fastlane, and NSPIRES
- Routes complete, certified proposal for departmental and college approval via UFIRST
- Works with DSP for final submission of proposal to sponsor
- Assists PI with post-submission sponsor inquiries related to items such as budget and SOW revisions, NIH Just-in-Time (JIT) requests, etc.

Principal Investigator (PI):

- Notifies departmental Research Administrator of intent to submit
- Initiates new proposal in UFIRST
- Provides Research Administrator with collaborating department(s)/ institution(s) required information
- Works with Research Administrator to develop a detailed budget and justification
- Specifies type of work being undertaken to ensure appropriate facilities and administration (F&A) rate is utilized
- Provides completed technical description of work
- Gathers Letters of support if applicable
- Completes any required training
- Identifies and addresses any compliance requirements such as:
 - Animals
 - Human Subjects
 - Bio-safety concerns
 - Export Control
 - Conflicts of Interest

- Ensures all Financial Interests and Outside Activities are disclosed via UFOLIO
- Certifies accuracy and integrity of the full and complete proposal including technical and financial commitments via UFIRST, indicating proposal is submit ready
- Completes proposal with sufficient lead time to ensure a full and complete review by the Chair, Dean, and DSP prior to formal submission
- Complies with University, sponsor, state and federal policies and regulations

Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP):

- Reviews proposal solicitation and provides guidance to principal investigator and departmental administration regarding any pitfalls or unusual requirements identified in solicitation.
- Completes any exceptions and reps & certs documents prior to submission
- Completes final review of proposal prior to formal submission to sponsor. Time permitting, DSP will:
 - Confirm the institutional data presented
 - Confirm the appropriate F&A rate and any justification for deviations from the federal negotiated rate are included
 - Confirm the proper fringe benefit rates are included
 - Confirm that the proposal meets the solicitation requirements for page limitations, cost limitations and other proposal limitations
- Act as institutional signatory on all proposal and proposal related documents under Power of Attorney designated by the President of the University.
- Registers the University in sponsor electronic research administration systems and provide guidance to campus on account requirements for those systems.

Proposal Submission Deadline Policy

University Policy:

As per DSP, submit-ready proposals must be submitted to the Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) by 9 a.m. the business day prior to the sponsor's published submission deadline to be considered on-time by DSP. Absent of extenuating circumstances, any proposal submitted after the internal deadline will not be submitted by the university to the sponsor. This policy applies to any sponsored program whose solicitation is published by the sponsor at least 30 calendar days prior to the sponsor's due date.

These two days provide DSP with time to identify and resolve any issues with the proposal that are inconsistent with university policy or sponsor submission requirements. This is important as such issues may result in the inability for the university to carry out the work within the budget submitted or in the proposal being rejected by the sponsor without review. If issues are identified during DSP's review, the Principal Investigator and relevant unit administrator will be contacted to address issues and facilitate submission to sponsor.

View the [Official Proposal Deadline Policy](#) for more information.

Have questions? Visit the [Proposal Deadline Frequently Asked Questions page](#).

College of Engineering Internal Submission Deadline Policy:

Currently the HWCOE requests proposals be submitted to departmental Research Administrators two days prior to the DSP deadline.

Basic Components of a Proposal

Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal Title • Proposed Period of Performance • Amount Requested • Principal Investigators Contact Information • Institutional Contact Information
Abstract or Proposal Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Impression of Proposal • Can Stand Alone • Outlines Objectives, Methodology and Significance of Proposed Work
Project Description (Statement of Work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth description of work to be performed • Includes Anticipated Outcomes and Accomplishments • Can Contain Details of Current or Previous Research Related to Proposed Work
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists References Cited Within Statement of Work
CV/Biographical Sketch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for Key Personnel • Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational Background - Professional Interests - Publications
Budget and Budget Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Estimate of Expenses Necessary to Complete Proposed Statement of Work

Facilities and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines Institutional Resources Available for Use on Project • Examples Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laboratory and Office Space - Animal Facilities - Equipment - Computer Services
Current and Pending Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Sources of Support • Project title • Percent of Effort • Award Period of Performance • Annual Costs

Proposal Preparation

Types of Proposals:

New Proposal- A proposal submitted to a sponsor for the first time, or a proposal being resubmitted after having been declined by a potential sponsor.

Revised Proposal- Modification to a proposal that is pending or unfunded, but not officially declined by the sponsor. If a proposal has been declined, a new proposal must be prepared.

Supplemental Proposal- A supplemental proposal requests an increase in funding for a proposal that has previously been funded. The requested increase would occur in the current budget period and may involve a broadening of the project's approved scope. Any additional funding requested requires completion of a new budget.

Continuation Proposal- A continuation proposal only applies to a multi-year award and formally requests already approved funding for the next phase (or next year) of the award. Typically, sponsors require a progress report and budget before releasing additional funds.

Pre-proposal/Letter of Intent- The purpose of a pre-proposal or Letter of Intent (LOI) is to pique the interest of a potential sponsor. This type of proposal typically does not include a cost estimate and is not expected to result in an award. Sponsors that wish to proceed will request submission of a full proposal.

Fellowships

DSP Routing Guidance for Pre-proposals:

Depending on the information being presented or requested by a sponsor will determine if a Pre-proposal, Letter of Intent (LOI) or White Paper needs to be routed through UFIRST, e-mailed to the Division of Sponsored Programs, or submitted directly by the PI. Below is DSP's matrix to assist units in choosing the correct routing process.

	Yes budget detail provided or cost sharing committed	No budget detail provided
Yes – Institutional Signature Required	Route through UFIRST proposals	PI submits to DSP at ufproposals@ufl.edu
No – Institutional Signature Required	Route through UFIRST proposals	PI submits directly to sponsor

Notes: Institutional Signature means a signature from the Division of Sponsored Programs (this includes DSP submission in sponsor electronic systems such as Fastlane). Budget detail means a line item budget or categorical breakdown. It does not include lump sum or a total dollar amount being provided or submitting to a program with a stated cap amount and no detailed budget is being provided. You can also download the [Instruction Guide \(pdf\)](#).

Budget Development:

When beginning the budget development process of a proposal, it is important to first review the solicitation, as well as any other sponsor-specific guidelines, to determine the appropriate budget type for use. This will also provide an opportunity to gain clarification concerning budget limitations, specific cost considerations, requirements for cost sharing, and other special financial information. It is important to note, that while an internal budget template may be used to create an excel version, sponsor forms and budget formatting should always be used for formal submission. Failure to follow sponsor requirements may prevent the proposal from being funded.

There are generally two types of budgets utilized by sponsors; these are:

Detailed Budget- most common type of budget utilized for submissions to Federal, State, Industry and Non-profit organizations. These budgets will require a line-by-line breakdown of the following items:

- Salary
- Fringe
- Materials & Supplies
- Travel (Domestic and Foreign Travel should be separated)
- Publications
- Sub-award(s)
- Consultant(s)
- Tuition
- Participate Support Costs (PSC)
- Equipment (Include Quotes)

For multi-year proposals, DSP recommends using up to a 3% escalation factor for those recurring direct costs found in each budget period, such as Salary and Wages, Fringes, Travel, Equipment, and Material and Supplies. For Tuition as part of a Graduate Student Research Assistant compensation, use the escalation factor found on the Tuition Table. Do not escalate F&A rates. The most currently approved and published rates at the time of proposal must be used.

Modular Budget- NIH specific budget that is required for new proposals, competing continuations, resubmissions, and competing supplements requesting up to a total of \$250,000 in direct costs.

Determination of Cost Applicability:

When working with the principal investigator to prepare the proposal budget, it is imperative that all costs included in the budget adhere to Uniform Guidance and:

- **Reasonable-** A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost ([2 CFR 200.404](#)).
- **Allocable-** A cost is allocable to a particular Federal award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that Federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received ([2 CFR 200.405](#)).
- Treated consistently across the institution
- Conform to the guidelines set forth within the solicitation

Detailed Budget Justification:

Although each sponsor may have specific templates required for the budget justification, the following information is necessary in most cases:

Salary & Fringe- ensure a complete and accurate listing of all key personnel and associated effort commitments for each. Provide a brief statement regarding the roles and responsibilities of each key personnel, as well as details related to any Post-Docs, Graduate and Undergraduate Students listed on the budget.

Materials & Supplies- provide available details related to the materials and supplies currently anticipated being needed by the principal investigator

Travel- if domestic and foreign travel are included in the budget, each should have a designated justification provided. This should include details associated with possible conferences and required sponsor meetings, including location (when possible), individuals attending and length of stay.

Publication Costs- brief description of anticipated publication expenses.

Tuition- list appropriate tuition rates for budgeted graduate students. Tuition does not bear IDC.

*Participant Support Costs-*if applicable, itemize these costs accordingly. Participant Support Costs does not bear IDC.

Equipment- provide details related to anticipated equipment purchases by the principal investigator. Vendor quotes are recommended and equipment does not bear IDC.

NIH Modular Budget Justification:

Personnel Justification- the Personnel Justification should include the name, role, and number of person-months devoted to this project for every person on the project. Do not include salary and fringe benefit rate in the justification, but keep in mind the legislatively mandated salary cap when calculating your budget. [When preparing a modular budget, you are instructed to use the current cap when determining the appropriate number of modules.]

Consortium Justification- if you have a consortium/subcontract, include the total costs (direct costs plus F&A costs), rounded to the nearest \$1,000, for each consortium/subcontract. Additionally, any personnel should include their roles and person months; if the consortium is foreign, that should be stated as well.

Additional Narrative Justification- additional justification should include explanations for any variations in the number of modules requested annually. Also, this section should describe any direct costs that were excluded from the total direct costs (such as equipment, tuition remission) and any work being conducted off-site, especially if it involves a foreign study site or an off-site F&A rate.

Additional Guidance for NIH Modular Budgets available [here](#).

Cost Sharing:

According to DSP, cost sharing commitments must meet all of the following criteria:

- Are verifiable from the University's accounting records;
- Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
- Are allowable under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles;
- Are not included as contributions for any other sponsored award; and
- Are not deriving from another sponsored award, except where the Sponsor specifically allows.

In addition, all cost sharing, except over any salary cap, must be approved by the appropriate business official with authority to commit funds on behalf of the unit covering the cost.

Types of Cost Share:

- ***Mandatory Cost Share*** - mandatory cost sharing is required by statute or as condition of a specific solicitation/program announcement. It will normally appear in the award document from the sponsor. Mandatory cost sharing expenditures are tracked and documented and will be reported back to the sponsors in a Financial Report.
- ***Voluntary Committed Cost Share*** - voluntary committed cost sharing is created if a proposal budget or budget justification specifically includes cost sharing where none was required. If funded, the PI and the University are “committed” to provide the project with the indicated support. Voluntary committed cost sharing expenditures are not normally reported back to the sponsors, however, it is still required the University track and document these costs as they are subject to audit.
- ***Voluntary “Uncommitted” Cost Sharing*** - voluntary uncommitted cost sharing represents contributions to a sponsored project made after the award is received. For example, the PI decides to spend more time on the funded project than proposed and not charge the sponsor for the increased effort. Uncommitted cost sharing is not planned and is not accounted in the UF cost sharing system.
- ***Third Party “In-Kind” Contributions*** - computed value of any services and/or resources by a third-party in support of a sponsored project being administered by UF. May be in the form of:
 - Real Property
 - Equipment
 - Supplies
 - Other Expendable Property
 - Other Goods and Services Provided Specifically for the Proposal
- ***University “Cash” Contributions***: cash contribution to a sponsored project by UF for cost sharing purposes. This can be provided as a:
 - University gift
 - Endowment
 - Other Unrestricted Funding Source to Cover Direct Costs on a Sponsored Project
- ***Cost Sharing of Facilities and Administration (F&A) Costs-***
 - **Contributed F&A**: F&A related to any cash contributions made to a project by the UF.
 - **Waived F&A**: UF agrees to waive charging its federally negotiated F&A rate on a proposal. The amount of F&A waived is considered “unrecovered F&A” and can be utilized as cost share if allowed by the sponsor.

**Typically, federal funds cannot be utilized to fulfill cost share commitments.*

Standard Sponsor Checklists

NSF Quick Check (Standard Proposal)

Fonts: Arial, Courier New, Palatino Linotype – 10 pts. or larger, Times New Roman – 11 pts. or larger, or Computer Modern family – 11 pts. or larger (used by Math and other Sciences)

Margins: 1" all around

Page numbers: Each section individually paginated

Sections:

- Collaborators and Other Affiliations
- Cover Sheet
- Project Summary (one page) – must have all three sections labeled. Do not upload a separate file unless it contains special characters
 - Overview
 - Intellectual Merit
 - Broader Impacts
- Project Description – generally 15 pages. Must include:
 - Separate section labeled “Broader Impacts”
 - No URLs
 - Results of Prior NSF Support. Must include:
 - NSF award number, amount, and project dates
 - Title
 - Summary of results including two distinct headings for “Intellectual Merit” and “Broader Impacts”
 - Listing of publications from award (can be referenced and shown in References section)
 - References (no page limit) – must include:
 - Names of all authors (no “et al”)
 - Biographical Sketch (two page limit each) – must include:
 - No personal information
 - Professional Preparation (oldest first)
 - Appointments (list current first)
 - Products
 - 5 closely related
 - 5 other
 - Synergistic activities (no more than 5)
 - Nothing other than these categories
 - Budget Justification – 5 page limit
 - Include rate of pay (monthly or yearly salary) for senior personnel, post docs, and other professionals
 - Current and Pending Support – Must include:
 - “This Proposal” – make sure title, dates, and amount are correct

- Make sure effort is listed in “Calendar” months
- Facilities – No page limit
- Post Doc Mentoring Plan – One page maximum required when a Post Doc is listed in the proposal
- Data Management Plan – two page limit
- Supplementary Docs – always check announcement for special requirements

NIH Quick Check

Forthcoming

Glossary & Useful Terms

Allocable Cost- A cost is allocable to a particular Federal award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that Federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received.

Allowable Costs- Determined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the sponsor's requirements and/or UF policy. Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) defines allowable costs as those that are: 1. Reasonable; 2. Allocable to the project; 3. Given consistent treatment by use of generally accepted accounting principles; 4. Conform to any limitations or exclusions set forth by the sponsored agreement or Uniform Guidance.

Audit- Generally a verification of compliance. Audits can be programmatic or financial and involve different types of testing and assessments, depending upon the audit purpose, source of funding and auditor affiliation.

Award- Funding that has been obligated by a funding agency for a specific project.

Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)- An announcement that is general in nature and that identifies areas of research interest, including criteria for selecting proposals, and soliciting the participation of all **offerors** capable of satisfying the government's needs.

Budget- A detailed statement outlining estimated projects costs to support the proposed Statement of Work.

Budget Justification- Statement used to explain expenditures as necessary to complete the proposed research.

Capital Equipment - Tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.

Cognizant Audit Agency- The Federal agency designated with responsibility for performing audit-related activities on behalf of the federal government for federally-funded activity at the University. The cognizant audit agency for UF is the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Compliance- Category of research administration concerned with the application of federal regulations to research.

Consortium- A consortium is defined as any award comprised of multiple members that come together to jointly fund research projects through pooled membership fees.

Consultant -An individual or business whose expertise is required to perform the project. Services are temporary, special, or highly technical. A consultant may not serve as senior personnel (e.g., Co-Investigator, Principal Investigator).

Continuation Proposal- A continuation proposal only applies to a multi-year award and formally requests already approved funding for the next phase (or next year) of the award. Typically, sponsors require a progress report and budget before releasing additional funds.

Contract- A mechanism for the procurement of a product or service with specific obligations for both sponsor and recipient. Typically, the sponsor specifies a research topic and the methods for conducting the research in detail, although some sponsors award contracts in response to unsolicited proposals.

Cooperative Agreement- A form of Federal Assistance. This mechanism is used by federal agencies when a program requires more agency involvement and restrictions than a grant but requires less agency supervision than a contract.

Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) -Federally mandated accounting standards intended to ensure uniformity in budgeting and spending funds.

Cost Sharing- The portion of project costs not covered by the sponsor. Cost sharing should not be confused with other commitments of university resources to the principal investigator's program, staff, equipment or facilities that are not specifically or solely related to a specific award.

Direct Costs- Direct costs charged to sponsored agreements must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

Effort Months- The months needed to complete the scope of work on the award.

Electronic Research Administration (ERA) - Conducting research administration via the utilization of electronic resources such as the Internet, form templates, databases, and other electronic tools.

Equipment- Generally, articles of non-expendable tangible personal property having a useful life and an acquisition cost which meet or exceed the established thresholds for defining equipment. Equipment is not a replacement part or component returning a piece of equipment to its original condition. If a component increases the capability of the original equipment and has an acquisition cost that meets or exceeds the established equipment cost thresholds, it is considered a capital item.

Export Controls- Federal regulations controlling exports. A license must be obtained from the relevant agency prior to the export of any covered equipment, materials, technology, software, or information.

Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Cost Rate- The rate used in determining the indirect costs of a sponsored program. Set, approved rates are to be used for agreements with the federal government and are to be used on all project budgets unless prior waiver approval is obtained.

Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs- Costs incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored award, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity. F&A costs are also referred to as Indirect Costs, or Overhead.

Fellowship - Awards of financial support to individual named students or postdoctoral scholars, or to the system member on behalf of individual named students or postdoctoral scholars.

Financial Conflict of Interest- A situation which could potentially create competing professional or personal interests that could make it difficult to fulfill duties impartially; or which could create an appearance of impropriety that could undermine confidence in the ability to act properly.

Fiscal Year (FY)- Any twelve month period for which annual accounts are kept.

Fixed Price (FP) Contract/Grant -A contract/grant for which one party pays the other party a predetermined price, regardless of actual costs, for services rendered.

Foreign Travel- Includes travel outside the U. S. and its territories and possessions (Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Canal Zone) and Canada. A trip is considered foreign travel for all legs of the itinerary if the traveler does not return to his/her duty post prior to departure for a foreign destination.

Fringe Benefits- Employee benefits paid by the employer. (e.g., FICA, Medicare, Worker's Compensation, Insurance, etc.)

General Purpose Equipment- Equipment which is not limited only to research, scientific, or other technical activities.

Grant- Financial assistance mechanism providing funds to carry out a sponsored award.

Grant/Contract Officer- A sponsor's designated individual who is officially responsible for the business management aspects of a particular grant, cooperative agreement, or contract. Responsible for the review, negotiation, award, and administration of a grant or contract and interprets the associated administration policies regulations, and provisions

Grants.gov- Single Web source <http://www.grants.gov/> to find federal funding opportunities and apply for grants.

Guidelines- The outlines and/or policy statements from the sponsor which should be followed in order for a proposal to be accepted by the funding agency.

Human Subjects- A living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains:
1. Data through intervention or interaction with the individual. 2. Identifiable private information.

IACUC- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. The committee that oversees research involving animals.

IRB Institutional Review Board- A board or committee within UF to provide review at the institutional level for ethical concerns in research, such as laboratory animal care and the use of human subjects in research.

Intellectual Property (IP)- Intellectual property is a broad term that encompasses the various intangible products of the intellect of inventors. These include patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, know-how, and other proprietary concepts, including an invention, scientific or technological development, and even computer software and genetically engineered microorganisms.

Indirect Cost Rate- The rate charged on sponsored projects in order to meet the facilities and administrative needs of the research being funded. The federally negotiated rate at the University of Florida is 52.5% for on-campus research.

In-Kind Contribution- A non-cash commitment (such as contributed effort, facilities use, or supplies) to share the costs of a sponsored project.

Institutional Training Grant- A very specific type of proposal that will be clearly identified as an institutional training program in the funding opportunity announcement (FOA).

Key Personnel- The personnel considered to be of primary importance to the successful conduct of a research project. The term usually applies to the senior members of the project staff contributing time and effort.

Lab Animals- Animals used in research projects.

Mandatory Cost Share- Mandatory cost sharing is required by statute or as condition of a specific solicitation/program announcement. It will normally appear in the award document from the sponsor. Mandatory cost sharing expenditures are tracked and documented and will be reported back to the sponsors in a Financial Report.

Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC)-The basic indirect costs calculated on a subset of direct costs, normally excluding among other costs, equipment, patient care, space rental, alterations and renovations, and subcontract costs in excess of the first \$25,000. i.e., the portion of direct costs on which indirect costs are based.

Modular Budget- Modular budgets are a budget option for NIH applications requested less than \$250,000 in direct costs in a given budget period.

New Award- An award not previously awarded or a renewal or continuation award treated as a new award by the sponsor and given a new agency number.

New Proposals- A proposal submitted for the first time or for an ongoing project that must ~~recompete~~ for funding prior to expiration of the original award.

No Cost Extension- An extension of the period of performance beyond the expiration date to allow the principal investigator to finish a project. No additional funding is provided.

Notice of Award (NOA)- The legally binding document that serves as a notification to the recipient and others that a grant or cooperative agreement has been made; contains or references all terms of the award; and documents the obligation of funds.

Over the Cap Cost Share- Cost share is "over the cap" when an individual's base salary is more than the allowed salary amount stipulated by a Sponsor. For example, NIH has a salary cap of \$192,300 for 12 months of effort.

Participant Support Costs- Participant support costs are small incentive payments to an individual to attend an educational conference, seminar, workshop, or other training event.

Principal Investigator (PI)- The individual responsible for the conduct of the sponsored project.

Program Announcement- Describes existence of a research opportunity. It may describe new or expanded interest in a particular extramural program or be a reminder of a continuing interest in an extramural program.

Program/Project Officer- A sponsor's designated individual officially responsible for the technical, scientific, or programmatic aspects of a particular grant, cooperative agreement, or contract.

Proposal- An application for funding that contains all information necessary to describe project plans, staff capabilities, and funds requested. Formal proposals are officially approved and submitted by an organization in the name of a principal investigator.

Reasonable Cost- A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost.

Request for Applications (RFA)- Announcements that indicate the availability of funds for a topic of specific interest to a sponsor. Proposals submitted in response to RFAs generally result in the award of a grant. Specific grant announcements may be published in the Federal Register and/or specific sponsor publications.

Request for Proposal (RFP)- Announcements that specify a topic of research, methods to be used, product to be delivered, and appropriate applicants sought. Proposals submitted in response to RFPs generally result in the award of a contract.

Request for Quotations (RFQ)- A formal request for a price quotation on equipment or supplies to be purchased.

Revised Proposal- Modification to a proposal that is pending or unfunded, but not officially declined by the sponsor. If a proposal has been declined, a new proposal must be prepared.

Scope of Work (SOW)- Scientific or research approach that will be used by the PI and his or her staff in attaining the goals set forth in the sponsor guidelines.

Senior Personnel- Professional personnel who are responsible for the scientific or technical direction of project.

Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR)- Agency administered programs supported by earmarked federal funds, making grants to small business entities.

Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)- Grant applications and/or programs to fund small business "teamed" with research institutions.

Sponsor- An external funding source that funds a proposal with an award. Sponsors include private businesses, corporations, foundations and other not-for-profit organizations, other universities, and federal, state and local governments.

Sponsored Award- A sponsored award is any externally funded activity for which there is a: 1) specific statement of work that is expected to be completed within a defined period of time; 2) a budget; and 3) a designated principal investigator (PI) or program director (PD). A sponsored award may support UF activities including but not limited to research, training, travel, conferences, instruction, public service, and construction. Sponsored projects are funded by numerous funding sources, including charitable grants.

Subaward (Subcontract)- A document written under the authority of, and consistent with the terms and conditions of an award (a grant, contract or cooperative agreement), that transfers a portion of the research or substantive effort of the prime award to another institution or organization.

Supplemental Proposal- A supplemental proposal requests an increase in funding for a proposal that has previously been funded. The requested increase would occur in the current budget period and may involve a broadening of the project's approved scope. Any additional funding requested requires completion of a new budget.

Abbreviations

AFOSR	Air Force Office of Scientific Research (DOD)
ARO	Army Research Office
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
DAF	Department of the Air Force
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DOD)
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DOA	Department of the Army
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense (includes Air Force, Army, ARPA, and Navy)
DOE	Department of Energy
DOED (DED)	Department of Education
DOL	Department of Labor
DOI	Department of Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DON	Department of the Navy
DOT	Department of Transportation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulations
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MTDC	Modified Total Direct Costs
NAS	National Academy of Science
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NCI	National Cancer Institute
NCRR	National Center for Research Resources
NCURA	National Council of University Research Administrators
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
NEH	National Endowment for the Humanities
NEI	National Eye Institute
NHLBI	National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
NIA	National Institute on Aging
NIAAA	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism
NIAID	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
NIAMS	National Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases
NICHHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NICRA	Negotiate Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
NIDCD	National Institute on Deafness & Other Communicative Disorders
NIDDK	National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases
NIDR	National Institute of Dental Research
NIEHS	National Institute of Environmental Health Services
NIGMS	National Institute of General Medical Services

NIH	National Institutes of Health
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
NNCDS	National Institute of Neurological, Communicative Disorders, Stroke
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NSF	National Science Foundation
ONR	Office of Naval Research
PAPPG	Proposal and Award Policies and Procedure Guide for NSF
PHS	Public Health Service
PI	Principal Investigator
RFA	Request for Applications
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Quotes
TDC	Total Direct Costs

Appendices

Authors Draft

Appendix 3. Johns Hopkins University Institutional Review Board Approval



Homewood Institutional Review Board

3400 N. Charles Street
Wyman Park Building,
Suite N468 Baltimore MD
21218-2685
410-516-6580
<http://homewoodirb.jhu.edu/>

Michael McCloskey, PhD
IRB Chair

Date: October 30, 2019

PI Name: Marianne Woods

Study #: HIRB00009997

Study Name: Enhancing the Proposal Submission Process by Developing Procedures for the Engineering Departmental Pre-award Administrator: A Study at a Top Ten Public University

Date of Review: 10/29/2019

Date of Acknowledgement: 10/29/2019

Expiration Date: 10/29/2022

The above referenced study has been *acknowledged*.

Review Type:	Exempt
Funding Agency:	Not funded
Grant or Contract Number:	
International Sites:	No
Maximum number of participants:	15
Vulnerable populations:	None
Consent process:	
Assent Process:	

No changes may be made to the protocol or the consent form without the approval of the Board.

To keep the Homewood IRB files current, we are assigning an expiration date to projects that qualify as not human subjects research or exempt. You will receive an email notification prior to the expiration date shown above, providing guidance to extend this project.

Please keep this message in your files for future reference. Thank you for contacting the Homewood IRB about this research and for providing the requested information to make this determination. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to inform the HIRB of any adverse consequences to participants that occur in the course of the study, as well as any complaints from participants regarding the research. In conducting this research, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the *HIRB Policies and Procedures Manual*.

Approved Documents:

Consent or Assent Materials:

Questionnaire - Google Forms.pdf

Recruiting Materials:

RE_ Use of email to capture information for Capstone.pdf

Email Script.docx

Study Team Members:

Michael Wood

APPROVAL IS GRANTED UNDER THE TERMS OF **FWA00005834** FEDERAL-WIDE ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH DHHS REGULATIONS FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Appendix 4: Short Bio

Michael Wood received his Bachelor of Science in Leadership Studies from Texas A&M University in 2014. Shortly after his graduation, he began his career as a Proposal Administrator with Sponsored Research Services at Texas A&M. This created the desire to work towards a Masters in Research Administration from Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his graduation from Texas A&M University, Michael served on active duty in the United States Marine Corps, serving in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In his free time, Michael enjoys traveling, camping, and cheering on his Aggies at various sporting events with his wife and two boys.